

XIV.—THE CROCODILE IN BURMA.

I should be interested to know whether any of your readers can throw some light on the distribution of crocodiles in this country.

As far as I can ascertain, the only common Crocodile here is *Crocodilus porosus*, which is confined to the mud banks and mangrove swamps of the coast of Tennasserim and certain parts of the Delta.

Although Peacock in his 'Game Book of Burma' states that both *Gavialis gangeticus* and *Crocodilus palustris* (or possibly *C. siamensis*) rarely occur in the Irrawaddy I have never met anyone who has confirmed this observation. Even if rare specimens do sometimes occur it seems to me a remarkable fact that these two species have been unable to establish themselves in any numbers in the Irrawaddy when they are so common in the Indus, Ganges and Brahmaputra. Although crocodiles are now unknown near the town of Pegu, Ralph Fitch who visited it in 1590 tells us that the moat was full of these reptiles. Sangermano who visited Burma two centuries later states that 'Crocodiles are not very numerous in the great river Ava (Irrawaddy)' which would rather point to the fact that crocodiles did once inhabit our rivers but are now almost extinct there. This view is rather endorsed by the name Migyaung-ye literally (Crocodile Water) which is a town situated on the river some 250 miles up from the mouth of the Irrawaddy.

Although I have frequently asked Burmans living on the banks whether they have ever seen crocodiles in this area, they all replied in the negative though some of them added that they often met their young on shore. By their young however they explained that they meant the 'Hput' (*Varanus monitor*) which is common in the Dry Zone and which many Burmans believe transforms itself later in life into a crocodile.

BHAMO BATTN.

J. A. M. SYMNS.

BURMA FRONTIER FORCE,
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[Of the various species of crocodiles occurring within our region *C. porosus* is known to occur in Burma. As regards *C. palustris*, its existence in Burma is at present doubtful. Theobald (1868) recorded a large specimen from Thayetmyo and remarked that it was the only specimen he had ever seen in Burma. There is no record of its having been obtained since. As regards *Gavialis gangeticus*, it is said, in the new edition of the *Fauna*, to occur in the Kaladan river, Arrakan. Barton '1929' records a specimen shot at the mouth of the Maingtha, a tributary of the Sweli River, Upper Burma. It is the sole record from the Irrawaddy river system.—Eds.]

XV.—NOTE ON AN EXPERIENCE WITH AN INDIAN PYTHON (*PYTHON MOLURUS*).

Some twenty-eight years ago in the low country of the Province of Uva, in Ceylon, one cloudy afternoon I wounded a spotted deer. A Sinhalese village tracker and I followed the blood spoor, the Sinhalese leading. The spoor went down into a small gully containing running water and up the other bank along a game track,

The tracker was running about six or seven yards ahead of me, up the bank, when I saw about six feet of a python dart suddenly at the calf of the man's leg and as suddenly withdraw. I could have sworn that the snake's head had made contact with the man's leg. I naturally stopped dead at seeing what had happened and called to the man. He stopped and turned and I told him what had happened. He said he had not been touched. We then looked into the dense undergrowth by the game path and, within two feet of the path, there was a 'pile' of python neatly arranged. The Sinhalese jungle villager remarked 'they never catch a man'. I killed the snake, which measured some fourteen feet, and it was difficult to get the python off its anchorage. Since then, I have asked many Ceylon jungle folk whether a python will catch a man and have been invariably informed 'no'.

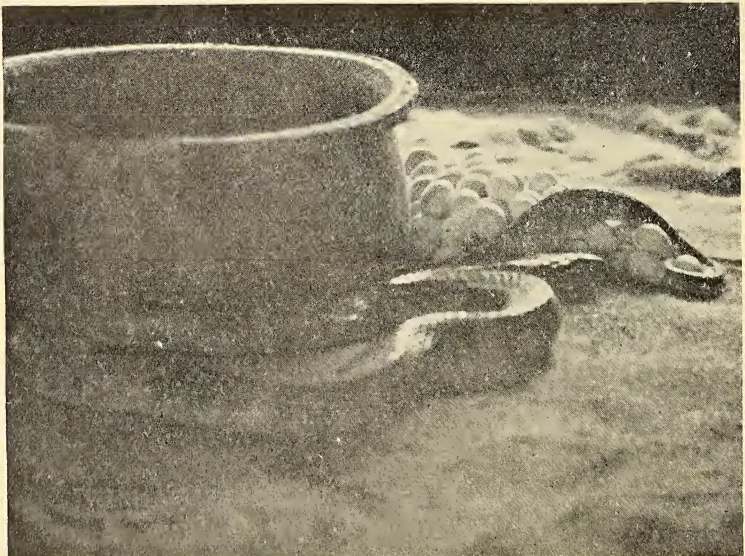
KANDY,
CEYLON,
September 21, 1941.

F. J. S. TURNER.
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[While the Indian Python may attack a man, there appear to be no authentic records of this snake actually overcoming or swallowing a man though capable of doing so.—Eds.]

XVI.—THE NUMBER OF EGGS IN THE CLUTCH OF
THE CHECKERED WATER-SNAKE (*NERODIA PISCATOR*).

(With a photo).



With reference to the note on the record number of eggs (88) laid by the Chequered Water Snake, *Nerodia piscator*, published on p. 225, Vol. xxxii of this *Journal*, I wish to report that this record has been slightly raised by a specimen kept in the